

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 ACCRA 06458 231508Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 /069 W

-----018047 232040Z /73

R 231156Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9771

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 6458

LONDON FOR SEITZ

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PGOV, GH

SUBJ: REGISTRATION PERIOD EXTENDED

REF: ACCRA 5873

1. ELECTORAL COMMISSION ANNOUNCED AUGUST 22 THAT VOTER REGISTRATION IN GREATER ACCRA, WESTERN AND CENTRAL REGIONS WILL NOW CONTINUE UP TO SEPTEMBER 29; IN EASTERN AND ASHANTI REGIONS, UP TO OCTOBER 13. REGISTRATION IN VOLTA, BRONG-AHAFO, NORTHERN AND UPPER REGIONS WILL RUN AUGUST 30-OCTOBER 29. ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER ALSO APPEALED ONCE AGAIN TO QUALIFIED GHANAIS TO REGISTER SO THEY MAY TAKE PART IN MARCH 1978 REFERENDUM AND JUNE 1979 GENERAL ELECTIONS.

2. COMMENTING EDITORIALY, DAILY GRAPHIC DEPLORED "THE LACKADAISICAL MANNER" IN WHICH MANY PEOPLE ARE APPROACHING THIS EXERCISE. IT CAUTIONED AGAINST USING  
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PAGE 02 ACCRA 06458 231508Z

EXTENSION AS AN EXCUSE FOR EXTENDING TWO-YEAR TIMETABLE FOR TRANSITION TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE AND URGED ELECTORAL COMMISSION TO ENLIST SCHOOL TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND CHIEFS AS REGISTRATION OFFICIALS.

3. COMMENT: ABOUT 250,000 OF THE 1.2 MILLION POTENTIAL VOTERS IN THE GREATER ACCRA, CENTRAL AND WESTERN REGIONS

ARE ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN REGISTERED IN THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF THE CAMPAIGN (I.E., UP TO AUGUST 15). THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS PUBLIC EXHORTATIONS TO GET PEOPLE TO REGISTER. FACT THAT EXERCISE IS BEING EXTENDED CONFIRMS OUR FEELING THAT IT HAS NOT BEEN GOING WELL. THERE SEEM TO BE SEVERAL REASONS FOR THIS: (A) GOG'S ADMINISTRATIVE GANGLIA ARE POORLY DEVELOPED AND NEW DEMANDS OF REGISTRATION PROCESS HAS OVERTAXED SYSTEM; (B) SOME DISSIDENTS (PROBABLY STUDENTS AND PROFESSIONALS) HAVE BEEN SPREADING WORD THAT GOG WILL USE REGISTRATION ROLLS TO IMPROVE TAX COLLECTION PROCEDURES; (C) OTHER SKEPTICS ARE CLAIMING THAT EXERCISE IS FUTILE SINCE UNION GOVERNMENT ALREADY EXISTS (A CHARGE GOG HAS HOTLY DENIED); AND (D) GHANAIS AS A WHOLE SEEM TO LACK CONFIDENCE THAT REFERENDUM WILL OFFER ANY MEANINGFUL CHOICES (SOME EXPECT ALTERNATIVES WILL BE UNION GOVERNMENT OR NOTHING). THUS WHILE EXTENDING REGISTRATION PROCESS WILL ADD MORE NAMES TO THE ROLLS, END RESULT IS STILL LIKELY TO DISAPPOINT GOG AND TO LEAVE A SIZEABLE PERCENTAGE OF THE ELECTORATE DISENFRANCHISED. HOLMES

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Review Markings:**  
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